THE Reconstructionist

Vol. X. February 18, 1944 Shebat 24, 5704 No. 1

EDITORIALS
- *Encouraging News*
- *Jewish Community Planning in Pittsburgh*
- *For a Permanent F.E.P.C.*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE GREAT AMERICAN PROPHET
By Herman Kieval

INTERNAL JEWISH DISCIPLINE
By Lawrence W. Crohn

BOOK NOTES
By Bernard Isaacs

REALITIES AND VALUES

CORRESPONDENCE

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairman: Mordecai M. Kaplan
Associate Chairman: Ira Eisenstein
Managing Editor: Eugene Kohn

Associate Editors: Israel S. Chipkin, Samuel Dinin, Abraham G. Duker, Judith K. Eisenstein, Theodore Friedman, Solomon Goldman, Jacob S. Golub, Bernard Heller, Philip Houtz, Samuel C. Kohs, Milton R. Konvitz, Theodore N. Lewis, Milton Steinberg.

Contributing Editors: Michael Alper, Nathan A. Barack, Shlomo Bardin, Morton M. Berman, Philip S. Bernstein, Asher Block, Samuel M. Blumenfield, Ben Zion Bokser, William J. Boxerman, Mortimer J. Cohen, Miriam R. Ephraim, Harry Essrig, Emanuel Gamoran, Judah I. Goldin, Robert Gordis, Emanuel Green, Max Kadushin, Louis M. Levitsky, Joshua Loth Liebman, I. D. Minzberg, Edward T. Sandrow, Simon Shetzer, Joshua Trachtenberg, Leo Trepp, Jacob J. Weinstein, Max Wiener.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Herman Kieval—
Rabbi of Beth Judah Congregation, Ventnor, N. J.

Lawrence W. Crohn—
Prominent and active worker in Jewish communal affairs, Detroit, Mich.

Bernard Isaacs—
Superintendent, United Hebrew Schools of Detroit, Mich.

As announced in our issue of February 5th, the Subscription price of *The Reconstructionist* is now $2.00 for 1 year; $3.00 for 2 years.

RECONSTRUCTIONISM IN ACTION

The Executive Committee of the Jewish Reconstructionist Fellowship is ready to receive applications for charters from Fellowship Chapters. As soon as ten members of a group sign the required membership application, a charter will be issued.

Is your group ready?

The Jewish Reconstructionist Fellowship,
15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

ANNOUNCING

A SYLLABUS OF THE PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM OF RECONSTRUCTIONISM

A Course of Study, complete with outlines, questions, subjects for discussion, projects for action, and recommended readings.
Designed for the use of Reconstructionist Fellowship Chapters and Study Groups.
Price: Twenty-Five Cents

FOR A BEAUTIFUL AND IMPRESSIVE SEDER SERVICE PLAN TO USE

THE NEW HAGGADAH

in Your Home and at the Public Seder of your Congregation.

A Chaplain overseas says: "I well remember the thriling experience my Congregation had when I used the New Haggadah. I am planning to use it here."

Price: 75 Cents

——————————*ORDER BLANK*——————————

JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FEDERATION, Inc.
15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

Please send me.....copies of the New Haggadah.
Please send me.....copies of the Syllabus for Study.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

THE
Reconstructionist

Vol. X. February 18, 1944 Shebat 24, 5704 No. 1

EDITORIALS

ENCOURAGING NEWS

AT long last the Jewish people is being remembered. The Jewish problem is no longer hidden behind a curtain of official silence. It is now exhibited in public and recognized as one that demands a solution. Three events have recently occurred, each of which is occasion for a renewal of hope and faith. They are, in the order of their occurrence, the appointment by President Roosevelt of a War Refugee Board, his appointment of a National Committee against Nazi Persecution and Extermination of Jews of Europe, and the introduction into both houses of Congress, under bi-partisan sponsorship, of a joint resolution calling upon Great Britain to implement the Balfour Declaration by opening up Palestine to free Jewish immigration and colonization.

The appointment of the War Refugee Board accomplishes the purpose of the Gillette-Taft and Baldwin-Rogers resolutions introduced respectively into the Senate and the House. It establishes a board to concern itself with rescuing as many Jews as possible from the death to which they have been doomed by the Nazis. The personnel of the Board gives promise of effective action. It includes Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Knox, and Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, all of whom are directly responsible to the President. This fact makes certain that the work of the Board will not be nullified or interfered with by any other agency of the government. Although the name of the Board does not contain the word *Jew* or *Jewish,* the White House statement announcing its appointment makes specific and explicit reference to its purpose of rescuing all the Jews who can be rescued. The Board will cooperate with UNRRA, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, and non-governmental agencies, including such Jewish organizations as the JDC, the World Jewish Congress and Hias. The State Department has announced that it intends to appoint special attachés with diplomatic status abroad in strategic places. This should make possible the cutting of the red tape which, in the past, has so often and so tragically delayed action for the rescue of refugees.

The name of the "National Committee against Nazi Persecution and Extermination of Jews of Europe" also does not reveal the full significance of that committee's appointment. Apart from threatening with punishment the perpetrators of atrocities against Jews, there is little which

can be done directly to prevent Nazi persecution. But indirectly much can be done—and the Committee intends to do it—by combating anti-Semitism in America and exposing its un-American character. The outlawing of anti-Semitism is not something that can be accomplished by a single legislative act. It requires a long process of legislation and judicial interpretation to establish it. The work of the Committee should be helpful in achieving that goal. With Justice Murphy as chairman and such members as Vice-President Wallace and Wendell Willkie, it can be depended upon for effective work.

As for the joint resolution on Palestine, it is all that we Zionists could wish. It urges our government to use its good offices with the government of Great Britain in the interest of implementing the Balfour Declaration. It reiterates our country's endorsement of the Declaration in 1922 and it makes crystal clear that we interpret the Balfour Declaration to mean that the Jewish National Home shall be not a small enclave in a preponderantly Arab Palestine, but coextensive with the boundaries of Palestine itself. The resolution, therefore, demands that "the doors of Palestine shall be opened for free entry of Jews into the country, and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization, so that *the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth.*"

We have since received reassuring news that our State Department is in sympathy with the purport of the resolution and that the resolution is not likely to encounter much organized opposition in Congress and, above all, that Prime Minister Churchill himself has given permission to Zionist leaders to quote him as still favoring the Balfour Declaration.

All these developments are full of promise, but "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." We must not allow our natural rejoicing at the first happy omen of a change for the better in Jewish destiny to result in a dangerous sense of security. The nearer we get to our goal, the more intense will be the activity of those elements within and without Jewry who are bent on keeping us from it. The imperialist bureaucracy in the British Colonial Office, the pampered henchmen of the Mufti who are still an influence in the Arab world, the feudal aristocracy among the Arabs, the anti-Zionists among Jews, and other opponents of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine can still impose obstacles which will require strenuous effort to remove. As for anti-Semitism, the appointment of the National Committee headed by Justice Murphy does not mean that anti-Semitism is on its way out. When the vulgar anti-Semitic innuendos of Congressman Rankin can be applauded in the House of Representatives we cannot feel that an era of goodwill toward the Jews is just around the corner. Judging by the post-war experiences after World War I, as well as by the prevalence of anti-Semitic rowdyism in so many of our cities, we have more reason to anticipate a deterioration than an improvement of our situation in the immediate future. As for the rescue of Jewish refugees from Axis-occupied territory, the many compromises made by the Allied Military Government with Fascist and anti-Semitic elements in regions reconquered from the Axis make it necessary for us to remain vigilant against efforts by local authorities to sabotage the work of the War Refugee Board.

All of which amounts to this: If the promise of recent good news is to be fulfilled, we Jews must redouble our efforts on behalf of Zionism and the United Jewish Appeal, and in support of the American Jewish Conference and its undertakings.

JEWISH COMMUNITY PLANNING IN PITTSBURGH

THE annual General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds arrived at many important decisions. Outstanding among them is perhaps the resolution to create the National Community Relations Advisory Council. The function of this council is to formulate policy which shall govern civic protective work locally and nationally. This council is the successor to the disbanded General Jewish Council representing the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Labor Committee. It is an outgrowth of two years of discussion within the committee appointed by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds to bring about a coordinated Jewish agency and program for civic protective activities.

The novel features of this new advisory council are its democratic composition and its lack of "authority over fund raising or the organizational structure of the national agencies." Its authority will rest in the public opinion which it creates and in the integrity of the leaders and the organizations or communities whom the leaders represent. The democratic composition of the Advisory Council will contribute to this authority, for in addition to the four national civic protective agencies, local Jewish communities will be represented through the lay and professional heads of local civic protective agencies. Eleven of the larger Jewish communities were already named and others are to be coopted. Thus, for the first time will democratic and local community authority exercise some control over national agencies in policy and program making which affect the local welfare of Jewish communities large and small.

Another manifestation of the influence of local communities was the joint meeting of the national overseas agencies to announce another year of united fund raising activities. The phenomenal success of last year's joint efforts has led the leaders not only to continue the United Jewish Appeal, but also to undertake the raising of an unprecedented budget of $32,000,000 for overseas needs. It is well to remember that this United Jewish Appeal too is the result of pressure of local Jewish communities upon national leadership.

The problem of local Jewish community organization itself occupied an important place in the deliberations of the delegates to this General Assembly. The position of the local Jewish community council and the functional responsibilities of Jewish charity federations and welfare funds received much attention. Gradually local central agencies are beginning to respond to demands for an all-inclusive community program of social, educational, civic protective services, and for total community support of such services. The problem of Jewish community organization has been somewhat complicated by the establishment of general war chests in many cities. Experience in these communities is beginning to crystalize relationships and functions for local Jewish central agencies. In a few years it ought to be possible to evolve a functional pattern of all-inclusive representative Jewish community organizations.

Fund raising and budgeting naturally commanded the interest of all delegates. The reports this year showed overwhelming success of collections for Jewish needs —local, national, and overseas—whether Jewish communities participated in general war chests or not. Differences of opinion were rather strong concerning the advisability of joining the general war chests. Debate centered about the success or failure of collections for specific Jewish needs, and of relations maintained with non-Jewish elements of the com-

munities. The evidence for and against on the basis of experience seemed equally divided.

A major part of the program of this year's General Assembly was devoted to war and post-war planning of Jewish community services. Some brilliant papers were presented concerning post-war conditions and their influence on employment, social security program, standard of living, and concerning the prospects for boom and depression periods. Most interesting, perhaps, from a Jewish community point of view, is the stress which social workers placed on the need of shifting Jewish agency services from the poor and abnormal to the middle class and normal, since the needs of the former are met in increasing measure by government agencies. Professional or expert services rather than charity seem to be the new emphasis. Because of this change in stress, it is no wonder that, for the first time, the General Assembly included within its own agenda a discussion of cultural, group and Jewish educational activities. The speakers dwelt on the need for community planning of the normal, the cultural, the leisure time and the specifically Jewish services within the Jewish community program.

This year as in other years, the General Assembly provided for auxiliary meetings of national agencies. Through these meetings delegates heard much of what was accomplished and planned by the overseas agencies, by the civic protective agencies, by the Jewish Welfare Board, and its army and navy services, by the women's organizations, and by the American Association for Jewish Education. The meeting of this Association this year is especially significant because of the far reaching effect of the steps it took to establish a Federation of Bureaus of Jewish Education and Kindred Agencies. Thus the educational problems and policies of local educational central agencies will find their reflection in the national agency, which will also be influenced by local community control.

A notable departure at this General Assembly was the unanimous adoption of a resolution aganist the White Paper. Rarely if ever has this General Assembly taken a stand on questions of this character. It was a further reflection of the desire for unity and Jewish community life by the masses of our people.

In the closing words of the Executive Director of the NCJFWF, this General Assembly has taken another step forward to build and advance Jewish community life on the basis of "voluntary association, democratic organization and unity."

FOR A PERMANENT F.E.P.C.

WE have had occasion previously to comment farorably on the appoinment of the President's Fair Employment Practice Committee. Of all manifestations of racial and religious prejudice, the one most menacing is the "cold pogrom" of a denial of economic opportunity. We therefore hailed the appointment of a national committee to enforce the prohibition of economic discrimination on racial and religious grounds in all government employment, in interstate commerce, and in all work undertaken for private firms under contract to the Federal Government.

The authority of the F.E.P.C. has, however, recently been challenged by sixteen Southern railroads enjoined by it from discriminating against Negroes. They claim that it "was and is wholly without constitutional and legal jurisdiction and power to make and issue the directives which it made and issued." In order to clear up doubt as to the legal status of the F.E.P.C., Representative Scanlon of Pennsylvania has introduced into Congress a

bill which would give the F.E.P.C. permanent statutory status and not rest its authority on the extraordinary powers delegated to the Presidential office in time of war. The bill declares that "the right to work and seek work, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin or ancestry, is declared to be an immunity of all citizens of the United States, which shall not be abridged by any state or by any instrumentality or creature of any state."

Such a statute, if adopted, would be a most important item in an economic Bill of Rights for American citizens. Its application, however, by the Federal Government would of necessity be circumscribed by constitutional limitations on Federal authority. It could apply only to cases arising under the powers of the United States government to regulate interstate commerce. Although judicial interpretation has given a wide scope to these powers, there is still need for supplementary legislation by the states to make economic discrimination on the basis of race or religion universally prohibited. It is therefore encouraging to observe that a similar bill has been introduced into the legislature of New York State by Senator Condon and Asssemblyman Crews.

The present time, when man-power is at a premium, affords an excellent opportunity for all who are devoted to the cause of democracy to press for the enactment of such laws. If the present advantage is not seized, one may be sure that, in time of slack, the privileged majority groups will not be in a mood to forego their unjust advantages. What the disinherited elements of the population will then do to seek redress none can now foresee, but in such a situation lies the seed of social revolution; and the examples of Fascism and Nazism have shown that social revolution is not necessarily to the advantage of the masses. We can forestall such a situation only by acting now to abolish economic discrimination. We therefore urge the passage of the Scanlon Bill by Congress and of the corresponding Condon-Crews Bill by the New York State Legislature, and urge other states to enact similar legislation.

REALITIES AND VALUES

NOT ONLY IS TRUTH OFTEN stranger than fiction; it is at times more dramatic than the stage. There is no purpose in our publishing the following item other than the thrill of sharing vicariously in the deep emotional experience of those about whom it is told. Here is what happened, related in the colorless language of the usual news dispatch. Some of the Palestinian Jewish soldiers who served in the five Jewish companies fighting on the Italian front liberated 1,400 Jews from internment in an enemy concentration camp. When Jewish officers and men drove up in a truck bearing the *Magen David,* the joy of the interned Jews knew no bounds. Among the liberating force were relatives of some of them. The news of the event was conveyed in a letter from one of the soldiers who discovered his own sister among those interned. An American Jewish soldier met his father there, and there were other similarly dramatic and unexpected reunions. May there be many more such fifth acts turning threatened tragedy into melodrama!

THE YIDDISH SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE (Yivo) is planning to create a Museum of the Homes of the Past. Its object is "to immortalize all that has constituted and still constitutes the spiritual reservoir of the great masses of Jews in Eastern Europe." That is a worthy purpose, but we wonder—Can these values be preserved in this way? Can a museum of the Jewish homes of the past really

preserve them as a "spiritual reservoir" any better than the pressing of a rose can preserve the living flower? When a people has to make a museum piece of the institution of the home, it is indeed in a sad plight. What we should like to see is not so much a museum of the Jewish home of the past as an exhibition of the Jewish home of the future. We should like to see exhibited the kind of Jewish home in which American Jews should want to live. It would be a home decorated with Jewish pictures and works of arts, displaying Jewish books on its shelves and Jewish ceremonial objects, and resounding to the strains of Jewish music and song. At the same time it would be an American home, in which the interest of the family in the cultural life of America would be no less manifest than its interest in Judaism.

▼

THIS IS BEING WRITTEN almost on the eve of Lincoln's Birthday. On that occasion the spirit of Abraham Lincoln will no doubt be invoked far and wide throughout the land. But if his shade answers the summons, it will be horrified by the modern recrudescence of the states rights heresy which he had hoped the Civil War would uproot. Even in the North, columnists like Mark Sullivan in the *New York Sun,* applaud the Congressional opposition to the President's demand for a federal ballot for soldiers on the ground that the proposed ballot interferes with states rights. And the states rights issue has been resurrected for the same reason that brought it into prominence before the Civil War, the South's determination to keep the Negro enslaved. Senator Eastland of Mississippi boasted in the Senate, "The boys from the South are fighting to maintain white supremacy." The states rights that these gentlemen want is the right of the states to circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution, which prohibits the denial of the suffrage to any citizen on the ground of "race, color or previous condition of servitude." We hope that the observance of Lincoln's Birthday may remind Americans of his prophecy that the country cannot long endure half slave and half free.

▼

THE SEVERAL STATEMENTS which church leaders have issued in recent weeks concerning anti-Semitism and its inherently anti-democratic and anti-Christian character, have been all to the good. No lover of justice can do aught but acclaim them. But statements are one thing, and action is another. Until action is taken, the statements remain pious hopes. The kind of action which Christian religious leaders might take is not precisely for us to suggest; but we believe that one possible course of action has been suggested by a Unitarian minister in Brooklyn, N. Y., Rev. Karl B. Chworowsky has recommended that the Protestant ministry "bar from the use of the sacraments of the church" any one "who in any manner engages in agitation against his Jewish fellow-citizens." He urges that the Catholic church do likewise. Such a course would indeed represent an earnest attempt to deal with the problem, and not merely to talk about it.

▼

THE ROLE OF THE HISTADRUT in Palestine, and specifically the Hechalutz organization, in rescuing Jews from the very clutches of the Nazis, in Nazi occupied lands, has not been adequately publicized and appreciated. From letters received in Palestine from members of the Hechalutz, this chapter of Jewish heroism may be pieced together. By means of fictitious characters whose names include Hebrew words, the message of deportations, slaughter and self-defense comes through. "Our disagreeable Uncle Gerushovitz (deportation)," writes one, "has visited us several times. . . . At any

Abraham Lincoln, the Great American Prophet

By HERMAN KIEVAL

PROBABLY no statesman in history has called forth the unqualified praise of the synagogue to the extent that Abraham Lincoln has. He has been compared to various types of sanctified Jewish leaders. Solomon Schechter, in his celebrated address on the occasion of the Lincoln Centennial, compared him to Hillel and the Rabbis of the Talmud for his mystical devotion to the Constitution, the Torah of America. Emanuel Hertz likens him to Moses, whose role in history was also that of emancipator of slaves. This writer prefers to see Lincoln as the great American prophet, lineal descendant of the Hebrew seers, a latter day Amos or Isaiah.

One is tempted to dwell on the physical similarity of Lincoln to the prophets and of the incidental and accidental circumstances of his life to those of theirs. Call to mind the rough picture of Lincoln as he looked to a veteran political observer in Springfield—"tall, gaunt, ungainly, homely, ill-clad . . . long, bony arms, all supplemented by an awkwardness that was uncommon among men of intelligence." Is this not the popular picture of the Hebrew prophet, the tradition of Elijah—he of the hairy mantle and the wild mien? Others have expatiated on Lincoln's poverty, his rusticity and admittedly "defective" education; his humble origins are part of the American mythos. Truly he was a modern Amos taken from among the flocks and herds and sent to pit his strength of will against the hostility of a people, obdurate and stiffnecked. The shade of Jeremiah is called up in that terrible melancholy and morbidity which almost drove Lincoln to suicide. Even the intimate family life of Lincoln offers a parallel to the miserable domestic affairs of a Hosea and the personal tragedies of an Ezekiel; it is a well-known fact that the martyred leader was cursed with a shrewish, mentally-unbalanced wife who tortured her long-suffering mate without mercy. To complete the personal catastrophe, Lincoln was estranged from his father and buried his own dear son.

But these are, after all, superficial analogies; our main interest is concerned with the essential and abiding characteristics which carry the glowing coal of prophecy from the lips of an Isaiah to those of the martyr-president.

The Prophetic Vision of Lincoln

Prophecy as it developed in Israel had nothing in common with the babbling of a Delphic oracle or even the abstruse verbiage of a Nostradamus. The great prophets were not primarily concerned with the future but rather with the pres-

---

rate, I shall invite my cousin Haganasky (self-defense)—perhaps he will have some influence on him." Another writes: "Mr. Pachadsky (terror) is constantly with us. Heregman (murder) and Tevachovitz (slaughter) . . . send their regards." "Our dear Ami (my people) has decided to take Miss Haragavitz (killing) in marriage. . . . Perhaps Melech Hatzalaska (rescue) would like to send his blessings?" Behind these lines lie an epic of torture and fortitude. How the Hechalutz suicide squads manage to get through we do not know, and cannot imagine. Some day, if any survive, we shall know. In the meantime, the spirit they display should hearten us all—and inspire us to aid them.

ent and the ultimate implications of things happening in the present. Their visions served them as means of clarifying the vital life problems of their time. They were essentially men of affairs, intimately absorbed in the human give and take, the political, economic, social and moral questions which made up the civilization of their nation. It is true that they foretold the shape of things to come, just as Lincoln in one of his early speeches warned of swaggering dictators and analyzed their psychological perversities; but the prophets' clear vision of "the days to come" is but the necessary corollary of their profoundly intuitive understanding of the human situations which they saw developing before their very eyes.

The prophets had the remarkable gift of being able to see in situations, however complicated, the human element and of stating it in simple terms: good or evil, just or unjust, moral or immoral, pious or impious. The prophets were honest, straight, and moral men, mellowed with a full measure of love and mercy for their fellow-men. They called a spade a spade, corruption corruption; sin they named sin. Tricks and intrigue were foreign to them. They had no selfish interest but only a burning passion for justice and for right, which they pursued unswervingly, though the path, as they well knew, lay through suffering and often led to martyrdom. They were not supermen; their greatness lies in the fact that they were so very human. For in their achievement is the earnest that many, if not all, of God's people may some day rise to the dignity of prophecy—may foresee the course of human events, may foretell the fall of the mighty and the exaltation of the humble, may strike terror into the hearts of tyrants and bring healing to the wounds of their fellow-men.

Of such stuff was Lincoln, the American prophet, made. Early in his career he cut like a scalpel through the diseased tissue of politics and economics, through the selfish rationalization and misguided evangelism which surrounded the slavery question. He advised Stephen Douglas to get down to the truth before debating: "If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending we could better judge what to do and how to do it." He weighed the many proposed solutions to the slavery problem and found them all wanting—the pro-slavery ones because they were premised on immorality, the anti-slavery ones because they would have cured one evil by a greater one, viz., the destruction of the Union. Risking condemnation by both sides to the controversy, Lincoln felt constrained to state his own analysis:

> In my opinion the agitation will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot exist half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or the other.

This is the kind of talk which does not make for success in politics. Lincoln lost that senatorial election to Douglas, as his advisers had warned, but that was a trifle. He was destined for a greater mission and the bad beating he took at the polls was good for his prophetic soul. In another speech, in New York, he disregarded his political handlers who advised him to stick to platitudes. Lincoln spoke rather what his heart advised in defiance of precedent:

> There is but one political question before the people of this country. "Is slavery right or wrong?" History through the centuries has been teaching us that might makes right. Let it be our mission in the nineteenth century to reverse the maxim and to declare that right is might.

Hebrew prophets 2800 years earlier had made a practice of reversing the same old maxim!

Lincoln was an honest and a moral man. He saw, much as he dreaded the sight, that two mutually contradictory forces were at large in the country. They could never be reconciled but must some day fight to the death in an "irrepressible conflict":

> That is the real issue. That is the issue which will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles — right and wrong—throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time and will ever continue to struggle. . . . No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

Lincoln's Sublime Patience and Courage

But like all great prophets, Lincoln was patient, even with evil. The world was not coming to an end, and he did not demand an immediate harvest before the apple was ripe enough to fall of its own weight. Even as President, with the war draining the nation's best blood, Lincoln resisted tremendous pressure for the immediately emancipation of the slaves because the disadvantages of such an act outweighed the advantages insofar as the successful preservation of the Union was concerned. For we must remember that all of Lincoln's judgments were made with reference to the "eternal aspect," as it were, of his mystic ideal, "the Union." On this paradoxical approach to the slavery question, there is an illuminating remark by Professor T. V. Smith in his book "The Democratic Tradition in America":

> Lincoln had learned to accept evil and to tolerate it. But . . . Lincoln had never learned to call evil good. The technique whereby he saved both his modesty in admitting moral ambiguity in the universe and his integrity in refusing to call either terrestrial or celestial evil good constitutes a story of its own. . . . My best guess why we have promoted Lincoln from life through death to secular sainthood was that he had this scrupulous mind concerning good and evil.

This kind of thinking and talking demands courage and steadfastness of an unusual intensity, but such is the character of the prophet. Like his forerunners, Lincoln did not know the meaning of fear or weakness. A prophet does not count noses to see if he is on the right side but knows that one man with conviction makes a majority.

Lincoln stalked into Congress in 1846, on his first political venture of consequence, much as Amos burst into the royal shrine at Bethel—a denunciation of a popular and prosperous warrior-administration on the lips of both. Lincoln had struggled hard to get into Congress but he did not care for the position *per se*. He forfeited his Congressional career immediately by denouncing President Polk for fomenting the war with Mexico. That war was a popular one and brought proud victory and material aggrandizement to the American people. Lincoln might well have known that he was serving his last term in Congress; but injustice was injustice whether in high place or low. Denouncing popular wars was an old habit of the Lincolns on the Jordan—remember Micaiah ben Yimlah, among others.

The Prophetic "Call"

Was Lincoln inspired? Did he receive the "call"? Was he summoned by some Power not himself and ordered to duty as Moses and Isaiah, Amos and Jeremiah are said to have been? It is not within the domain of this paper to speculate on the psychic process by which the Prophets of Israel received their "inspiration." Let us confine ourselves to an examination of Lincoln's own words. He had seen his burning bush in the New Orleans slave market in the days when he was sailing flatboats down the Mississippi. "Boys," he

said, "if I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard." This was no vain rhetoric; it was a statement of aims such as drove Jeremiah from Anathoth to seek out the "great ones" in Jerusalem. But, following Jeremiah's good counsel, Lincoln did not seek out "great things," and so saved himself from great disappointments: "I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true; I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to the light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, stand with him while he is right and part with him when he is wrong:" All through his career, Lincoln felt that he was the servant of God; everything that he did or said in his mature years was motivated by one passion—to do the will of God. When he first read the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet, he exclaimed, "I promised God that I would do it."

Certainly Lincoln saw himself in retrospect as the instrument of God's providence. In a letter to an intimate friend, Father Chiniquy, Lincoln wrote:

> Has He not taken me from my poor log cabin, as He did Moses in the reeds of the Nile, to put me at the head of the greatest and most blessed of modern nations, just as He put that prophet at the head of the most blessed nation of ancient times? Has not God granted me a privilege, which was not granted to any living man, when I broke the fetters of four million men and made them free? Has not our God given me the most glorious victories over my enemies?

Yet he made no claim to any supernatural revelation; nor did his fanatical devotion to the guiding stars of his destiny come as a result of a purely rational process. There was reason and there was spirit, calm judgment plus a moral intuition. At the side of his fellow prophets, Lincoln marched "with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right." Above the stampede of the convention floor and the babble of the caucus room rose the stern voice of duty and Abraham answered "here I am," ready to do God's will though it meant the supreme sacrifice:

> Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.

Lincoln and the False Prophets

Where there are true prophets there are always false ones and Lincoln's case was no exception. On all sides men were having personal revelations and hearing the divine "call"—Abolitionist clergymen, pro-slavery clergymen, newspaper editors, North and South, politicians and crackpots. And each and everyone of them was anxious to share his gospel with the President. A typical instance was the visit by the Chicago Committee of United Religious Denominations in 1862. These ministers communicated to the President the information that it was God's will that he emancipate the slaves immediately. Lincoln's reply to these divine messengers is a classic of polite debunking and reveals much about Lincoln's ideas on "inspiration":

> I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men who are equally certain that they represent the divine will. I am sure that either the one or the other class is mistaken in that belief, and perhaps in some respects both. I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal his will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed that he would reveal it directly to me; for, unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is I will do it.

Everyone knows the famous incident in which a church member at a reception closed his remarks with the pious hope "that the Lord is on our side." "I am not at all concerned about that," commented the President, "for we know that the Lord is always on the side of right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and the nation should be on the Lord's side."

These replies are the more remarkable in that, although humorous, they are not facetious. No man was ever more sincere in his yearning to know the will of God, but he liked his information direct in the form of his own conviction and personal faith, not those of self-styled experts. He believed that all men were capable of ascertaining the will of God and every man needed it equally. As Schechter said, "No religious hero ever entered upon his mission to conquer the world for an idea or creed with more reverence and a deeper feeling of the need of divine assistance." When he took leave of his friends in Springfield for the presidency he prayed rather than spoke the great words:

> I now leave not knowing when or whether I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well.

It is in words like these that the essential humility and self-effacement of America's greatest prophet stand revealed. Though the passion for righting the national wrong burned like the eternal bush within him, he balked in true prophetic manner when the summons to the presidency came. "I must in candor say that I do not think myself fit for the presidency." "Let another and abler go," he said, "this is a work for giants, not for pigmies like me." One can hear Moses' heavy-tongued protests, or Amos's "I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet," or Jeremiah's, "I am but a child." Like Moses he was the most humble of men; and indeed he had need to be, for only a self-effacing man could have kept peace in the hornets' nest of his cabinet and military staff. Nor was he overzealous for the Lord when compromise or patience or deferring to the counsel of others was indicated; he steered clear of the well-intentioned extremism of an Elijah, who, in the Midrash, is rebuffed by God for excess of zeal in his prophetic mission: "Thou thinkest of self. Resign thine office as prophet."

Lincoln's Nationalism

There is another basic fact about the life and work of Abraham Lincoln which links him mightily to the Hebrew prophets. That fundamental kinship is their patriotism and their nationalism. Both Lincoln and the Prophets were humanitarians and the human race can claim them as its own; yet they lived and worked and died not as "citizens of the world," but as nationals of the United States of America and of Israel respectively. Lincoln's love for his country, his people, and its government was matched only by the love of the prophets for their nation and their religion; for he too regarded the Americans as a chosen people selected by God to proclaim liberty to the world:

> I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made; and I shall be most happy indeed, if I shall be a humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle.

It was this love for our great nation which made Lincoln's prophetic task so tragically painful; for there is no pain greater than his who must foretell catastrophe for that which he loves and serves. Who has ever read the Bible without a tear of commiseration for the prophets whose sad duty it was to call down destruction upon their beloved people? Whose heart does not bleed for Hosea as he pleads:

> "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?
> How shall I surrender thee, Israel?"

So it was with Lincoln. R. L. Duffus has pictured this situation in a recent poem:

How do you save a nation?
He would have saved it by laughter.
He would have saved it by justice.
He would have saved it by love.
But a Voice said—no, only by blood,
Only by innocent blood,
Only by pain, by death, by grief,
Only by the ancient slaying of the first-born,
Only so, Mr. Lincoln, can this nation long endure. ...

It was this passionate love for country that saved Lincoln and the Hebrew seers from the perversity of the "I told you so" attitude; they did not stand aloof from the crowd in a holier-than-thou pose, rolling under tongue the sweetness of warnings substantiated and prophecy fulfilled. They were men *of* the people and *in* the people; not "people" in the abstract, but specific national groups. Their love issued in mercy; yes, the prophets, sternest advocates of justice, were the most merciful of men. No sooner did they pronounce the doom of the sinful folk than their heart melted and their lips pleaded to God for mercy—"Is not Ephraim my favorite son, my darling child? For whenever I must punish him, my heart dwells on him still. Yes, my pity stirs for him—I must have mercy on him!"

Lincoln's Prophetic Emphasis on Union

Both the Hebrew prophets and Lincoln had to face the practical problem of uniting two groups of hostile brethren. The great prophets of Israel lived during a period in which the two political entities of Ephraim (Israel) and Judah were either openly fighting each other or had been irrevocably separated by exile. Yet not one prophet whose words have come down to us accepts the division of the House of Israel. On the contrary, this unnatural and fatal schism was considered by them to be the greatest of evils, and they dreamed with mystic fervor of the reunion of the two branches into one fruitful tree, to use the figure of Ezekiel. Similarly Lincoln never accepted the secession of the Confederacy. To him that was unnatural and contrary to his concept of the Union as the divinely-ordained destiny of the American people. "The Union with him in sentiment rose to the sublimity of a religious mysticism," wrote Alexander H. Stephens, the great Confederate leader. Every decision Lincoln made was measured by the yardstick of "Union." Even the slavery issue, as the President explained in his famous message to Greeley, would be handled along these lines. In his First Inaugural, Lincoln pleaded for Union in words which rise to the heights of a mystical hymn:

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Union for what? Surely not for its own sake. No, if we recall Lincoln's attitude toward the American destiny, we need not argue the point that Lincoln wanted his Union to fulfill a godly function. Nationhood was not in itself a spiritual ideal but ethical nationhood was. Like Israel of old, America was to be a people dedicated to the will of God, a modern Chosen People. How amazingly similar to the prophetic conception of Israel!

The Internationalism of Lincoln and the Prophets

Indeed it was this spiritual conception of nationalism which saved Lincoln from that chauvinism in which so many American scoundrels have found and still find their last refuge. Like the Hebrew prophets, the more nationalistic he was, the more internationalistic he became. He let his inspired voice be heard for freedom everywhere, for the liberation of all enslaved peoples. He expressed himself openly on Hungarian freedom, Irish inde-

pendence, and the tyranny of the Czar: "The sympathies of this country and the benefits of its position should be exerted in favor of every nation struggling to be free." As for chauvinist nationalism at home, Lincoln played the fire of his tongue and spirit on the rotten-wood of the Know Nothing Party, forerunner of Klans and Christian Fronts, "When the Know-Nothings get control . . . I shall prefer emigration to some country where they made no pretense of loving liberty—Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure without the base alloy of hypocrisy." When he heard that Massachusetts had adopted a measure discriminating against the foreign born, Lincoln wrote the editor of a German paper in Springfield:

> Understanding the spirit of our institutions to aim at the *elevation* of men, I am opposed to whatever tends to *degrade* them. I have some little notoriety for commiserating the oppressed condition of the Negro; and I shall be strangely inconsistent if I should favor any project for curtailing the existing rights of *white men* even though born in different lands and speaking different languages from myself.

Do we not hear in these words the echo of the shepherd of Tekoa—"Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor and Aram from Kir?" Those superpatriots in Congress and out who would today "keep America for Americans" should re-read the Scriptures of Abraham Lincoln the American: "Inasmuch as our country is extensive and new, and the countries of Europe are densely populated; if there are any abroad who desire to make this the land of their adoption, it is not in my heart to throw aught in their way to prevent them from coming to the United States."

Lincoln's Sense of Sin

Lincoln in his youth was an agnostic and passed through what Schechter calls a period of "puerile rationalism." Although he attended church services, he never did join any church. Yet nothing shows how ephemeral was this phase of his spiritual development better than the overwhelming sense of sin which dominated all of his mature thinking. Is there anything more characteristic of prophecy than the denunciation of sin and the call to repentance—"Return, O Israel, unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast stumbled in thy transgression?" The most dramatic chapter in all prophecy is perhaps the opening of the book of Amos. There the prophet catalogues the moral crimes of each of the neighbors of Israel and Judah, to the great delight of his chauvinistic fellow-countrymen, but he plunges them into indignant rage when he puts the sins of the Hebrew nation at the top of the list. The only solution is sincere confession and effective atonement; but sometimes the hour is too late even for that, and nothing remains but a catastrophic purge of the nation's dross and a bloody washing away of its moral dregs through war, defeat, and exile.

Let us now turn to the words of Abraham, the American prophet. In a proclamation to the nation, Lincoln tells of the reality of national sin which weighed heavily on his conscience: "We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. . . . We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. . . . Intoxicated by unbroken success, we have become . . . too proud to pray to the God that made us. . . . It behooves us then . . . to pray for clemency and forgiveness." Such a proclamation from a political leader is remarkable enough; but when we remember that it was made in a plea for a National *Fast Day*, in the best tradition of Joel and Jonah, then we can begin to appreciate what kind of spirit rested in the White House during those fateful war years. As

part of his campaign for national repentance, Lincoln smashed hard in true prophetic style at national ritual and formula which had long been divested of spiritual significance:

> When we were the political slaves of King George and wanted to be free we called the maxim that "all men are created equal" a "self-evident truth"; but now, when we have grown fat and have lost all dread of being slaves ourselves, we have become so greedy to be masters that we call the same maxim "a self-evident lie." The Fourth of July has not quite dwindled away; it is still a great day for burning firecrackers!

In the plural "we" Lincoln always included North and South; for he held them both guilty for the institution of slavery:

> If God wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

Nor did he exclude his own person from among the sinners. Like Isaiah, he too spoke with "unclean lips." He is reported to have said, in a moment of deep depression, "If our American society and the United States Government are demoralized and overthrown, it will come from the voracious desire for office, this wriggle to live without toil, work, and labor from which I am not free myself."

Implicit in the idea of sin is the corollary of God's justice. The suffering of the Americans, like the suffering of the Hebrews, was not a meaningless caprice but justly deserved retribution demanded by the inexorable laws of morality and expressed in the term "God's will." In September 1862, Lincoln jotted down a private "Meditation on the Divine Will," which fortunately has been copied by a friend. What conclusions he reached in his meditation are apparent in that unique state paper which can hardly find its equal outside of Scripture, the Second Inaugural:

> "The Almighty has His own purposes. Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God must needs come, but, which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from the divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?

Characteristically, this prophetic utterance did not receive popular acclaim; but Lincoln, the student of human sinfulness, understood this. "Men are not flattered by being shown that there is a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case, is to deny that there is a God governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told, and, as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls directly on myself, I thought others might well afford for me to tell it." How typical of the prophetic spirit to take upon oneself the humiliation and shame of others? Schechter calls it a characteristic of religious mysticism, and in prophetic literature the great prototype is the "suffering servant" mentioned in the book of Isaiah.

The Martyrdom of Lincoln

In our contemporary apotheosis of the martyr-president we tend to forget that his own life was a vale of tears. No president was more villified, none more unpopular. His very life was in constant danger and several assassination attempts were made before the "suffering servant" paid the supreme atonement for the sins of his nation. Lincoln lived in constant expectation of martyrdom—he even foresaw his end in a dream—yet, true to the prophetic tradition, his steadfast course was in no wise affected. Although he was the incarnation of prophetic optimism in his conviction of ultimate triumph over

evil, yet—motal clay that he was—he was constantly depressed by disappointments and frustrations. After the defeat at Fredericksburg, he echoed Jeremiah, "If there is any man out of hell who suffers more than I do, I pity him."

Time, however, has rectified the popular verdict on Lincoln. The better angels of the American nature—to use a Lincolnism—have touched the true chords of human conscience and swelled the universal chorus of praise. Even his bitterest rival, Jefferson Davis, confessed ten years after the war, "Next to the destruction of the Confederacy, the death of Lincoln was the darkest day the South has ever known." Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea, Elijah and Ezekiel, Lincoln stands vindicated in the eyes of history and enshrined in the temple of the human soul.

BILLS IN CONGRESS WORTHY OF SUPPORT

(With this isue, we begin the publication of a department entitled, "Bills in Congress Worthy of Support." We hope that our readers will be stimulated by it to write letters to their Senators and Congressmen, urging them to back the bills listed. One of the "mitzvot" of democracy should become the writing of letters to the lawmakers informing them of public sentiment.—Editors)

ANTI-POLL TAX:

H. R. 7, introduced by Congressman Vito Marcantonio; referred to Judiciary Committee of Senate and reported out November 12. Urge cloture to defeat threatened filibuster.

EDUCATIONAL FINANCE ACT:

S. 637, introduced by Senator Elbert Thomas; recommitted to Education and Labor Committee on October 20. Urge Committee to report bill to floor.

PERMANENT F.E.P.C.:

H. R. 3986. See editorial in this issue. Urge members of Congress to sign discharge petition, and urge Congressman Thomas E. Scanlon to enter discharge petition. M.R.K.

Internal Jewish Discipline*

By LAWRENCE W. CROHN

THE problem of Internal Jewish Discipline is an ever-present one, but only in times of great stress is it looked squarely in the face. This is regrettable since, in any emergency, it is always too late to substitute quickly made plans for what should be well-established tradition.

The Need for Jewish Self-Discipline

To be sure, the good name of the Jew was ever regarded as a most valuable asset and he who brought a blot upon the Jewish escutcheon was especially despised by his fellowmen. A respected community was a source of pride to every member and even Christian princes were proud of their well-organized Jewish settlements. But in more recent times, with the disintegration of the Jewish community and the loosening of time-honored religious controls, self-discipline within the Jewish group has all but disappeared. Indeed, Jewish self-discipline seemed to have become unnecessary along with the other honored Jewish traditions which, with the advent of Democracy and Liberalism in the world, appeared so superfluous to many. But of no avail was the sacrifice of Jewish internal values, and today

*An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the annual Institute of the Jewish Community Council of Detroit, on October 24, 1943.

thousands of Jews remain completely unaware of the most rudimentary factors involved in the physical and moral survival of our people.

To recreate the methods and the ideals of Jewish group discipline of former days is no easy matter. The corporate Jewish community has lost its power not merely because it has no longer any quasi-legal controls delegated to it, but also because the primary concern of Jewish leadership has shifted from matters of the spirit to affairs of an entirely different order. Jewish life has lost much of its meaning to most Jews, and therefore the need for self-discipline has not been evident until the present catastrophic period.

The necessity for Jewish self-discipline is two-fold. First, it is self-evident that we are all judged by the transgressions of the evil-doers rather than by the saints among us. But secondly, self-discipline is also desirable because Jewish life is thereby enriched and made more meaningful.

While Jews are subject to the same laws as all Americans, the Jewish situation is such that harm is done to all of us when Jewish names are associated with law-breaking and crime. This is not to say that anti-Semitism would be abated if we were all *"tzadikim."* The Coughlins and the Gerald Smiths are not particular about where and how their attacks are directed. While these demagogues are the spearheads of the anti-Jewish movement, the masses who are uninformed, and ever-willing to believe anything evil about Jews, see in every publicized case of Jewish mis-doing, ready confirmation of their preconceived prejudices. The Jew who prospers in black market activities thus strikes a dagger into the heart of his own folk. A situation already bleak is brutally aggravated by Jewish mal-practice and crime. In normal times we may argue that we too are entitled to our quota or "fair" percentage of evil people. But at this moment, any realistic view of the problem forces the conclusion that evil-doers in our midst tend to unsettle our position and may alienate those who are our friends and true liberals.

Dealing with Jewish Transgressors

Detroit's Jewish Community Council has tried to cope with this problem and to set up methods of dealing with Jewish transgressors. There are certain trades which are largely dominated by Jews, such as the retail jewelry, furniture and clothing businesses. Some members of these trades have in the past been accused of sharp practices, and today there are new difficulties in connection with alleged violations of government regulations. Attempts are being made to have persons that are suspected of guilt recognize the harm they bring upon the whole Jewish community. Wherever trade organizations exist, they are called upon to cooperate with the Council in coping with the evil, and to apply preventive measures within their own trade.

The general public meets up with wartime price fluctuations at the retail counter, and in big cities the large numbers of Jewish retailers puts us in an especially vulnerable position. Likewise, the storekeepers in smaller towns frequently deal with Jewish wholesalers, and widespread rumors of scandal swiftly follow a few misguided actions. The community must deal with real trouble-makers as well as cope with milder and more understandable types of dereliction resulting from carelessness or ignorance.

Likewise in the wholesale meat and poultry business, the latter especially characterized by the presence of a large number of Jewish dealers, the leaders of these groups have been called into consultation. Some good results have already been achieved. But much remains to be done. It must be stated that inept supervision by the government agencies has often complicated the problem. Yet

these trade groups, that is those which are largely in Jewish hands, have had ample opportunity to learn that we of the Community Council, representing the community, are deeply concerned with the special problems caused by present wartime regulations. It can be admitted frankly that unusual conditions have come to our attention, and we can only hope to help in their solution. It is a serious situation in which the Jewish community should be very much interested.

And the Kosher butchers present other difficulties. Their leaders have been most cooperative and we believe they now understand the urgent need for close control of their trade. Large signs in these stores, placed at the behest of the Community Council, now indicate clearly the ceiling prices of their products, and request the customer to ask for nothing which is contrary to the regulations. Other evils we hope to cope with, although here too the government agencies also must understand the special circumstances under which the Kosher meat business operates.

The need for self-discipline among Jewish housewives is most urgent. On both sides of the counter, there must be vigilance in collecting ration coupons, and special demands should be out for the duration. The Community Council has launched a program to educate the Jewish public along these lines. This process of education is rendered more difficult by the fact that the relations between buyers and sellers in Jewish stores have never been circumscribed by laws and regulations. A free and easy going sociability always prevailed. The tightening controls and formal relationships required in this war period will need clarification and greater elaboration before they become well accepted patterns in buyer-seller relationships. So far, on the whole, the response has been patriotic and wholehearted.

The Council is experimenting and attempting to work out proper procedures and approaches in dealing with these problems. It is plain to those of us who have given some time to this work that the Jewish community has a stake in the operations of so-called Jewish businesses. It would be folly, in a time such as this, to let the situation get out of hand.

Self-Discipline on a Higher Level

But there are other matters which call for self-discipline on a higher level. Disorganization in Jewish life poses many problems. Self-discipline, imposed because it enhances the meaning and substance of Jewish living is a high ideal. Mushroom synagogues, for instance, are an ever-recurring blot upon our finer sensibilities. The commercialization on the cheapest plane, of our Holy Days, cries out for some permanent cure. Those of our people who want to observe the dietary laws have a right to look to the community for some direction of the commercial interests involved. It should not be left to the secular government to pass protective laws.

There are other problems which have come before the Community Council. In Jewish neighborhoods, retail stores keep open seven days a week. Whether or not one is a religious Sabbath observer, we, that ancient people which gave initial emphasis to the Sabbath idea, are shamed by this ugly practice in Jewish districts. It is not for the community, as such, to say which day, Saturday or Sunday, can be observed by these merchants—but one day in seven is little enough to close these stores. The moral influence of the Council should be put behind the observance of Saturday.

New Jewish institutions of learning are arising all over the land. This should be welcomed by all Jews, yet the overlapping and duplication that these efforts often create will cause dissentions in the com-

munity. It seems that anyone with a few thousand dollars can start a new Yeshivah, with great fanfare and without regard for the presently available facilities. Community Councils with special committees on Jewish education will have to bring order out of incipient chaos, to prevent destructive competition among these institutions.

In a frank discussion such as this, the physical deterioration of Jewish neighborhoods must not be overlooked. As Jews move into better locations, they must learn to care for lawns and the appearance of their homes. Jews themselves complain most bitterly about conditions in their neighborhoods. It is hoped that a sense of decorum on the Jewish street will follow in the footsteps of a similar reform in the Jewish synagogue. The need for such improvement arises not out of deference to Gentile sensibilities, but for the sake of sweetening Jewish life itself. The Jewish Community Council has as yet found no approach to this peculiar problem although delegates have not hesitated to urge action at open meetings.

In coping with these Jewish communal problems, the question always arises: What pressures can be brought to bear in obstinate cases? What sort of modern *herem* can the community impose? As already indicated, we can expect support for community efforts only to the extent that our community institutions command respect. If Jewish life becomes more healthy and creative, the response from Jews will be more positive. But even now, it may be possible to impose some manner of discipline upon irresponsible fellow-Jews. Memberships in synagogues and clubs must surely be closed to those who bring much discredit upon their people. This is the least that can be done. And the Jewish Federations might be better off if they refused tainted money when offered from such sources. Even more stringent measures have been suggested. The refusal of ecclesiastical services to known sinners has been discussed by rabbis. When the Jewish community will some day rise to its proper stature, a way may be found to excommunicate from the fold, socially and spiritually, those who bring grave dishonor on the Jewish name.

A well regulated community such as is implied in the above discussion will not wield its delegated powers for merely negative ends. Insofar as we, all of us, live in the Jewish community, we rise or fall with our fellow Jews. Our experiences with Jewish life can be either distasteful or a source of inner satisfaction. A well organized community, self-disciplined, will do much to enhance the reputation of the Jew to the outside world, but, of even greater importance, it will serve to enrich the daily lives and happiness of our people.

In the final analysis, what matters in the non-Jewish world is *what we are* and not *what we do*. We *are* Jews, a homeless people, and that makes organized anti-Semitism possible. *What we do* is primarily our own concern. If our standards of ethics and conduct are high, it is because our way of life is compounded out of nobly conceived laws and prophetic teachings. Our self-discipline is desirable not because there are more derelictions among Jews than other Americans, for this is not the case, but because we aim to be true to our great traditions and thus to do our share in keeping high our standards and in raising the standards of all men.

Book Notes

"ACHISEFER": Studies in the Literature and Language of the Jews. Short Stories and Translations from Yiddish Poetry. Edited by Samuel Niger and Menachem Ribalow. Published by Louis LaMed Foundation for the Advancement of Hebrew and Yiddish Literature, Detroit, Michigan.

LOUIS LAMED had an idea. Apparently a very simple idea—to bring two members of one family closer together, or in the words of the publishers, "to create greater and more frequent points of contact and interaction between Hebrew and Yiddish literature." On the surface it appears to be quite simple, reasonable and logical. But the fact is that there is no feud more bitter than the feud of brothers.

The average Hebrew reader looks with disdain and contempt upon what he calls the *"shund"* literature of Yiddish. Yiddish writing is to him the epitome of *amharatzut,* generally written with an appeal to the illiterates.

The Yiddish readers, on the other hand, class all Hebrew literature as *"batlanut."* To them the Hebrew writers are merely people who toy with words and live in the realm of old and discarded ideas.

Louis LaMed apparently sensed the magnitude of the enterprise, but this did not deter him from his path. He was determined to pursue his plans. He delved deeply into the problem and he discovered that while there were many points of differences, there were also large unexplored areas of mutual interest.

He likewise found that, while the average reader and writer of the two literatures strove to broaden the chasm, there were many who showed a great desire to bridge the gap of estrangement and misunderstanding. Bialik, the foremost Hebrew writer of this age, wrote with great skill and talent in Yiddish as well as in Hebrew. He knew that one language does not necessarily impoverish the other. On the contrary, one feeds and enriches the other. The Yiddish idiom adds color, zest and subtlety to the Hebrew, while the dignified classic expressions of Hebrew elevate and ennoble the rather prosaic Yiddish.

This, according to S. Niger, in the "Achisefer," was the two-fold aim of Yehoash in translating the Bible into Yiddish, to bring the Bible down to the level of the people, thus making their life fuller and richer, and to raise the status of Yiddish to the height of the classic Biblical style.

LaMed sought to emphasize the points of mutuality and reciprocation by revealing for the Hebrew reader the beauty, flexibility and subtlety of the Yiddish language, and to bring within the sphere of the Yiddish reader the creative genius of the Hebrew literature. For that purpose he established the LaMed Foundation, to encourage, support and finance the best efforts of both literatures.

The "Bi-Lingualism of Our Literature," by S. Niger, published in 1941, was the first product of this attempted project. The distribution of prizes to both Hebrew and Yiddish writers was another means of stimulating the study and research of both literatures. The publication of the history of the Hebrew and Yiddish literatures which is soon to ap-

pear in both languages is still another one of LaMed's enterprises.

The present volume, "Achisefer," is an outgrowth of this idea. The very name *Achisefer,* a combination of two Hebrew words, *Ach,* brother, and *Sefer,* book, is quite significant. Rendered freely it means "Fraternity of Literatures."

The "Achisefer" contains 585 pages and is divided into four sections:

The first section is devoted to essays on such subjects as the early translations of the Bible; the language of the Mishnah; Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish; the place of the Aramaic language in Hebrew and some of its influences on the Yiddish language of today; the interaction between the Hebrew and the Arabic languages; the effect of Yiddish upon the classic Hebrew of Mendele and vice versa; and Yiddish idioms in the works of Bialik. All these scientific but popularly written essays comprise the first part of the book.

The second section is entitled: "Our Literature in America for a Period of Twenty-five Years—1918-1943." M. Ribalow, editor of "Hadoar," writes very lucidly about the Hebrew literature of that period. His essay is very exhaustive. It occupies 90 pages of this volume, and is supplemented by a treatise on Hebrew poetry in America written by Yitzhok Zilbershlag. Mr. Niger writes about the Yiddish literature of the same period. In his masterly essay, he confines himself to main streams and principal currents. He allows himself, however, to deviate from his main thesis only for the purpose of clarity and elucidation. This elaborate essay is supplemented by a treatise written by Yochnon Twersky who reviews several Yiddish authors.

The third section is devoted to short stories. Two are translated from the Yiddish of Sholem Ash and Apatashu, and the other two were written originally in Hebrew by Jacob Churgin and Harry Sackler. This entire section occupies altogether about 60 pages. Why the editors chose to give such limited space to the most popular part of literature, the short story, is not clear; and why a story like Sackler's, which is really a beginning of a book, is included is also an enigma. The editors, according to the preface, intended to give three stories, one depicting the life of the Jews in Poland, the other in America, and the third in Palestine, and they apologize for publishing Churgin's story which was intended to depict life in Palestine, but instead gives a picture of Jewish slum life in Damascus.

The "American Story," which is translated from the Yiddish of Apatashu, is rather both American and Polish at the same time. It seems that the author fitted the "coat" for his European heroes and remade it, by request, for America.

The last and the largest part of the volume is the selection of poetry—translations from Yiddish into Hebrew, covering 216 pages. Thirty-two Yiddish poets are represented here. Each group of poems is carefully introduced with a picture of the poet, with a brief biography, and with a bibliography. In the translations of these poems we can see the beneficial influence of the two languages. In comparing the translation with the original one finds that the original Yiddish poem has gained in color and vigor of expression, while the Hebrew idiom has been enriched with some of the folk expressions prevalent in the Yiddish language.

LaMed, who is a lover of both literatures, has rendered a great service to lovers of each in making the Foundation and this work possible.

BERNARD ISAACS

CORRESPONDENCE

Criticizes Reconstructionist Stand on Emergency Committee

Sirs:

May I take issue with your appraisal of the situation created by the Emergency Committee to Save the Jews, and its consequent denunciation by the Interim Committee of the American Jewish Conference?

You palliate the doings of that Committee on the theory that "nature abhors a vacuum." I am afraid that this does not at all square with real conditions in Jewish llfe. It is not a vacuum that we have to contend with in the field of Jewish activity, but a confusion compounded by this group, which, at best, seems to have a "managerial" panacea for all Jewish woes.

I haven't the space here to analyze the whys and wherefores for this confusion, nor are motivations necessary. I could only refer you to the back numbers of your own publication for the verification of this statement. The confusion arises, first, because of the terrible dimensions and the baffling nature of the Jewish tragedy, as a result of the Hitler age, secondly, because of the multitudinous and overlapping activities of various organizations.

While there may be some truth to your statement that the Emergency Committee has enlisted sympathy and support from an appreciable number of Jews in the United States, this is not the issue, nor is it to be ascribed to their understanding of the "psychology of the masses," but rather to vulgar and sensational methods which generally succeed in deluding the masses in times of stress and tragedy. I believe that the statement of the Interim Committee aptly characterized the situation when it charged the Committee with "confusing propaganda for performance and advertisements for achievement."

I am therefore somewhat amazed to read the two alternatives you are counseling, namely, either to "take them in as partners," or "to steal their thunder."

As regards the first alternative, there might be something in the suggestion to "take them in," but certainly not on the basis of "partnership." Are you forgetting that the American Jewish Conference, so wholeheartedly supported by your paper and your movement, is not a "partnership" corporation, but a representative body chosen by at least two million Jews in the United States? Why should there be any talk of "partnership" with a group of Jewish "technocrats," who "know it all," and have been slurring most Jewish leaders? At best, they should not be denied admittance into the American Jewish Conference, provided they will abide by majority rule and the usual discipline.

Equally objectionable is the second alternative to "steal their thunder." Here, again, I am afraid you have been somewhat carried away by the "dramatics" of this group, without analyzing their methods carefully. Pray tell me what "thunder" is it you advise the authentic Jewish leaders to steal? Is it the "advertising" thunder? Well, it has been stolen already by many groups, and as you predict, "Emergency Committees and their ilk" will continue to steal the "advertising thunder," and I suppose that in due time you will counsel us to take the others in as "partners." But, this "advertising thunder," isn't it at all new. It had been used by others long before the Bergson group arrived on the scene, among others by yours truly in 1933, in a half-page ad in the New York *Times,* "The Truth about Hitler." Naturally, no responsible Jewish leader will ever stoop to insert an ad such as the Emergency Committee inserted offering to "rescue" Rumanian Jews at fifty dollars per head.

Have you in mind the "damatic" and spectacular "thunder," such as the production of "They Shall Not Die," in Madison Square Garden last summer? In my judgment this was an artistic flop. People with good taste called it a *hillul hashem.* Nor did it produce the solemn atmosphere that might be expected at such an occasion. It was rather reminiscent of "tent shows," with gum chewing and soda drinking folks. I had intended to take issue with your reviewer at the time, but found other tasks.

I wonder whether your editors have ever made a real and soul-searching study of the effect that these "thunders" are producing on the outside world? No one can be sure, of course, but you seem to adopt them lock, stock and barrel, on the theory that the "masses somehow sense that things cannot be worse." Well, suppose the masses do have that feeling, isn't it possible that they are mistaken, because misled? Doesn't this approach a counsel of desperation?

Just another specimen of the irresponsibility of this group. When the Senate Committee voted in favor of reporting the Gillette Resolution, which is to my mind the weakest of four similar resolutions, and almost meaningless, the Committee rushed into the Yiddish newspapers with a statement that Hitler's hand has now been stayed in his butchery of the Jews, and other such gross and grim boastings.

You should also familiarize yourself with an under-cover attempt by this group to corrupt the Jewish press and intimidate writers who oppose them.

It fact, it has come so far, that stooges of the Committee are assiduously spreading rumors that the Committee is bent upon buying the control of all Yiddish newspapers, so that the writers who oppose them now, face stern punishment; worst of all, that certain "deals" are going on, though I do not look for such a dark day, when a willful group such as

this will lay hands on freedom of the press in the Yiddish newspapers.

And so, dear editors, I am afraid there are no two alternatives, but one—to tell the truth, regardless of consequences. JACOB FISHMAN

We can only reiterate our original contentions: (1) that if the established Zionist bodies had enlisted the support and sympathy of those now attracted to the Emergency Committee, they (the Zionists) might have prevented the wrong people from resorting to "vulgar and sensational methods"; (2) the Emergency Committee should be brought into the orbit of organized and disciplined Jewish life. Mr. Fishman is correct when he writes: "At best they should not be denied admittance into the American Jewish Conference, provided they will abide by majority rule and the usual discipline." We would object to their admittance—or anyone else's, for that matter—on any other terms; (3) we should "steal their thunder." Mr. Fishman claims that it was "stolen" long ago, apparently without success. Zionism has not been dramatized and emotionalized. It has not been translated into the language of the arts. Mr. Fishman's reference to "They Shall Not Die" is unfortunately evidence on our side. If an "artistic flop" can attract 40,000 people in one night (two performances at Madison Square Garden), *al ahat kamah v'kamah,* an authentic work of dramatic art? Incidentally, we did *not* praise the show; we panned it. We advised the Committee: "Please go over that script very carefully and delete the flagrant offenses against accuracy and good taste. . . . And the Kaddish at the close . . . should not be sung gaily to the *nusah* of Rosh Hashanah." (THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, Vol. 9, No. 5); (4) Exaggerated claims, such as appeared in the Yiddish press, would have been avoided if the Committee were functioning under the discipline of organized Jewry.

We are most eager to know more about "under-cover" attempts "to corrupt the Jewish press, and intimidate writers who oppose them." We shall do all in our power to expose such tactics. But we stand by the editorial.

EDITORS

No Conflict Between Content and Language in Jewish Education

Sirs:

It seems almost paradoxical for Jews to argue which is more essential, the Hebrew language or Jewish content. Can one imagine an Englishman arguing as to which is more essential, the English language or the content of English literature. One is inextricably bound up with the other. Such would be the case of the Hebrew language under normal conditions, in a homeland where Hebrew would be the national language; there would be no such issue as to which is more essential, the language or the content thereof.

In the Diaspora where Hebrew is spoken and studied by an infinitesimal few, the need for Jewish content becomes greater day by day for the mass of American Jewry. A translated Judaism, in the words of Dr. Chomsky, is doomed to extinction and will lead to the complete assimilation of the Jews; but a translated Judaism disseminated intelligently can serve to gather together the lost sheep of our people. A translated Judaism is thus very essential in a supplementary capacity to those who have not made a study of the Hebrew language. As an illustration, the example of Theodor Herzl brings this out clearly. He was brought on the Jewish scene, if not directly, then indirectly by way of a translated Judaism. As he familiarized himself more and more with the Jewish problem, he did not go back to its source, the Hebrew tongue, and make a scholarly study of it; it was not essential that he do that. The result was the birth of political Zionism. This new Zionist philosophy immediately turned around and served as a spark that regenerated the desire on the part of myriads of Jews to go back to the source and study the Hebrew language.

A translated Judaism will thus not make Hebraists of the people in the Diaspora, but it will tend to cultivate a greater appreciation for things Jewish among the rank and file of Jewry. This appreciation of Jewish subject matter through the medium of the English language may be just the proper catalytic agent to bring back thousands of our Jewish brethren to the roots of this appreciation, namely the Hebrew language.

HERZL SHUR

A New Jewish Symphony

Sirs:

I read with hearty approval your remarks on Mr. Leonard Bernstein and his worthy ambitions in the field of Jewish music, which appeared in *The Reconstructionist* of December 10th.

I should like to add that since a man of Ernest Bloch's stature "has broken the ice," it is not so daring any more to profess one's spiritual and national adherence to Judaism. This I say without the slightest intention of minimizing Mr. Bernstein's faithfulness.

Calling myself as a witness to that effect—my Symphony ("haskara"-Memorial) had its world-premiere here on January 21 and 22, under Eugene Goossens. It is dedicated "to the martyrs of my people and to the souls of all champions of freedom." The symphony, a full-fledged work of 44 minutes, makes use of two ancient Hebrew melodies: (1) the "Tal-Kaddish," and (2) the solemn intonation of the "Olenu" on the High Holidays (the latter tune in the final apotheosis).

ERIC WERNER
Professor of Music, Hebrew Union College